



The Art of Facial Marks as a Symbol of Identity among Hausa Communities of West Africa

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Abstract: Art is the mastery of techniques involving temporary or permanent drawings and carvings on paper, objects, human bodies, and more, for purposes of identification and decoration. In this context, families, communities, and kingdoms in Hausaland, spanning the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Republic of Niger in West Africa, are distinguished by unique features often visible on certain parts of the face or body. These features, exclusively associated with specific families, communities, or kingdoms, are traditionally referred to as family or community facial marks or scarification. In Hausa, they are known as ‘tsagar gado.’ These marks are permanent incisions made on the face or other parts of the body for male or female members of the family, community, or kingdom. They are categorized into various types, but this paper focuses on two: facial marks indicating the village, town, or kingdom of the bearer (tsagar gado mai nuna asalin gari ko kasa), and those signifying that the bearer is not of Hausa origin (tsagar gado mai nuna asalin mai ita ba Bahausha ba ne). These facial marks are traditionally administered by Hausa barbers, known as wanzamai. This research provides a comprehensive exploration of these facial marks through qualitative methods, including individual and group interviews with selected participants, as well as consultations with memory institutions such as libraries, museums, and archives. Where photographs were unavailable, the study includes drawn representations to aid understanding.

Review Paper

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INTRODUCTION

Hausa people, who dominate the North-West Geo-Political Zone of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the southern part of the Niger Republic in West Africa, possess a unique cultural heritage that identifies various communities through permanent facial marks or scarification (inherited family facial marks). These marks are administered on the face and other parts of the body, signifying membership in specific communities or kingdoms, and are referred to as tsagar gado in the Hausa language. Examples of these facial marks include *Katsinanci*, *Dauranci*, *Gobirci*, *Zamfaranci*, *Kutunbanci*, *Kabanci*, *Kwannanci*, and *Arauci*. They are predominantly found in regions such as Katsina, Daura, Sokoto, Gobir/Tsibiri/Sabon Birni, Zamfara, Kano, Kabin Argungu, Kwanni, and Dogon Dutsi Kingdoms within the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Niger Republic.

Additionally, some ethnic groups that were not originally Hausa have, over time, been assimilated into

Hausa society due to prolonged residence in Hausaland. These groups, including some Fulfulde (Fulani), Tuaregs (Buzaye), and Borno people (Barebari), have adopted Hausa language, literature, and culture but retain distinct facial marks indicating their non-Hausa origins.

All the aforementioned facial marks are typically administered by Hausa traditional barbers, known as *wanzamai* (plural), *wanzami* (singular), and their craft as *wanzanci*. The art of *wanzanci* encompasses various practices, including shaving men’s hair, cutting the uvula, performing circumcision on male children, removing haemorrhoids or vulvar hematomas in female children, and creating traditional, decorative, or medicinal facial marks on the face and other parts of the body for both men and women. It also includes providing traditional medicine to the sick or those in need, among other practices.

Background and Justification for the Research:

According to Linton (1945), culture is “the way of life of a group of people. It is the collection of ideas,

habits, which they learn, share, and transmit from generation to generation.” Similarly, Aina (1983) views culture as the shared ideas, norms, values, and beliefs of a people. Many scholars agree that culture consists of both material and non-material aspects. Material culture comprises tangible objects that we can see and touch, such as tools, weapons, and arts. On the other hand, non-material culture encompasses the inner behaviors, attributes, ideas, desires, values, and norms of a group, expressed through customs, folkways, mores, language, and other external symbols. These non-material elements, while less tangible, strongly influence social behavior, helping to maintain public order and national cultural homogeneity amidst diversity.

In light of the above, extensive research has been conducted by students and experts on the socio-cultural settings of various groups in Nigeria—a country in West Africa—and other parts of West Africa. These studies often explore shared ideas, norms, values, and beliefs. However, there has been relatively little research on Hausa facial body marks compared to studies on other ethnic groups in Nigeria, such as the Yoruba, Tiv, and Igbo, who have extensively documented and highlighted the types and meanings of their facial marks. Notable works in this area include Augie (1983), Suleman (1990), Sallau (2000, 2009), Jain and P. U. (2009), Refworld Nigeria (2002), Heather (2012), Babajo, Sallau, and Lovejoy (2013), Alao and Olasade (2019), Benjamin (2019), Pulse Nigeria (2021), Fadehan and Barber (2021), Stephen (2022), and Afolabi (2023).

Given the above, it is justifiable to conduct further research on the facial body marks of the Hausa people of West Africa.

The first justification for this study is the fact that most existing research focuses on the meanings and types of facial marks among other ethnic groups in Nigeria, such as the Yoruba, Igbo, and Nupe, with limited attention to Hausa facial marks.

The second justification is that some of the research conducted on Hausa facial body marks exists only as academic projects, dissertations, or theses submitted to educational institutions as requirements for Diploma/NCE, Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, or Doctor of Philosophy certificates. These works are often written in Hausa language, limiting access to those who can read Hausa. This highlights the need for research in English that can benefit students, researchers, cultural anthropologists, and general readers worldwide.

Building on these premises, this paper elaborates on Hausa facial body marks, emphasizing their role in identity, and includes photographs and drawings of some facial marks that are no longer commonly observed today.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical Framework has been defined by Connaway and Radford (2021) as “a useful working definition to utilise theory/theories and their constituent elements as the presumed ‘working model’ that drives the investigation and analysis of social phenomenon. A theoretical framework will shape how you look at and interpret your data.” In this regard, this research will focus on Cultural Theory. Cultural Theory can be categorized into three types: Macrosociology, Microsociology, and Mesosociology. It investigates how culture and societal structures influence individual behaviors, beliefs, and identity. Couldry (2012) explains that “central to this perspective is an understanding that culture, as a shared system of meanings, guides human behaviour and societal operations” (p. xx).

These shared meanings, symbols, and practices enable communication and cooperation, foster social cohesion, and influence identity formation. Thus, culture can be described as the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes one group or society from another.

In compliance with the Theory of Culture, this research will focus on collecting, collating, and analyzing data on Hausa facial body marks, their meanings, types, and their role within the social structure as a means of identity among Hausa communities in West Africa.

Several works on Hausa culture align with the teachings of Cultural Theory, including Augie (1983), Suleman (1990), Sallau (2000, 2009), and Babajo, Sallau, and Lovejoy (2013). These works provide valuable insights into cultural practices and their relevance to the study of Hausa facial body marks within the framework of Cultural Theory.

Practitioners of Hausa Facial Body Marks

Traditional barbers, popularly known as *wanzamai*, are responsible for performing facial body marks in Hausa land. They are categorized into three types:

1. **Wanzaman Gado:** These barbers practice all aspects of the craft, including shaving men’s hair, cutting the uvula, performing circumcision on male children, treating haemorrhoids or vulvar haematoma in female children, making traditional, decorative, and medicinal facial marks on the face and other body parts for men and women, and administering traditional medicine to those in need, among other tasks.
2. **Wanzaman Koko:** These barbers specialize only in shaving hair and are typically found on streets or in small shops.
3. **Wanzaman Jarfa:** These practitioners focus on creating facial body marks, primarily for girls and, in some cases, for married women and boys, to beautify their faces and other parts of their bodies.

How They Learn the Art of Facial Body Marks

Hausa traditional barbers learn the art of facial body marks through hands-on practice, typically starting with designs on a mature but not fully dried gourd. They train for one to two years under the guidance of an experienced practitioner. Even after being allowed to practice on human bodies, they remain under supervision to ensure precision and avoid mistakes.

Instruments Used in Administering Facial Body Marks

The instruments used in the practice of facial body marks include:

1. **Askar Tsaga (Jarfa):** A two-sided small sharp knife used specifically for making facial marks.
2. **Razor Blade:** Used as an alternative tool for creating facial body marks.
3. **Horn and Cups:** Utilized for traditional and modern cupping practices associated with the craft.

Steps of Administering Facial Body Marks

1. **Preparation:** The process begins by rubbing a small amount of water on the part of the body where the marks will be administered. This softens the skin, making the cuts smoother and easier to execute.
2. **Cutting:** The traditional barber then makes the desired marks with precision.
3. **Application of Healing Substance:** After the marks are cut, a powdered substance derived from a black cooking pot (*bakin tukunya*) is applied to the wounds. This substance ensures the marks heal quickly and enhances their visibility once healed.

Purpose of Identity Facial Body Marks Among Hausa People

Hausa people administer facial body marks to their baby children, typically within the first week of delivery, and sometimes before the children reach two years of age. These marks serve the following purposes:

- a. **Identification:** To identify members of a particular family, community, or kingdom, especially during conflicts and wars.
- b. **Cultural Identity:** To maintain a sense of belonging and preserve the cultural heritage.
- c. **Differentiation:** To distinguish one family, community, or kingdom from another.

Types of Identity Facial Body Marks Administered to Hausa People

There are three main types of facial body marks used for identity in Hausa land:

1. Marks Indicating Kingdom or Origin (*tsagar gado mai nuna asalin gari ko kasa*): These marks identify the kingdom or place of origin of the bearer.
2. Marks Indicating Non-Hausa Origin (*tsagar gado mai nuna asalin mai ita ba Bahausha ba ne*): These marks signify that the bearer is not of Hausa origin.
3. Marks Indicating Craft or Occupation (*tsagar gado mai nuna sana'ar mai irin ta*): These marks reveal the traditional occupation or craft associated with the bearer.

Facial Marks that Indicates Kingdom of its Bearer "Tsagar Gado mai Nuna Asalin Gari"

These types of facial marks identify Hausa people from various kingdoms in Hausa land. They include, *Katsinanci*, *Dauranci*, *Gobirci*, *Zamfaranci*, *Kutunbanci*, *Kabanci*, *Kwannanci*, *Arauci*, etc, and they are mainly found in Katsina, Daura, Sokoto, Gobir/Tsibiri/Sabon Birni, Zamfara, Kano, Kabin Argungu, Kwanni, Dogon Dutsi Kingdoms in the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Niger Republic respectively.

Facial Marks of Katsinawa



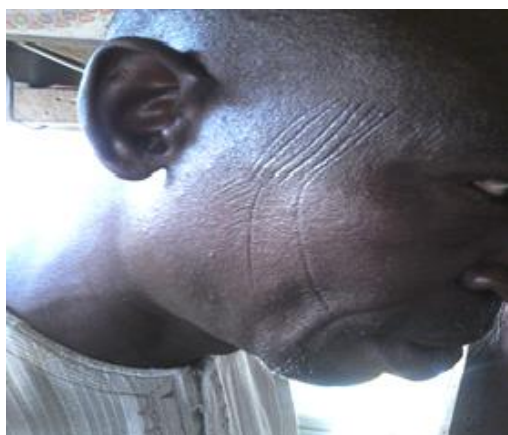
The bearers of this facial mark are referred to as Katsinawa. While the scars sometimes vary in design, the standard Aska pattern for Katsina remains consistent. In

some parts of Katsina, the Kalangu scar is applied on the temple. Within the Katsinanci scarification, distinctions in social class are evident. Members of the Katsina

aristocracy typically have seven scars on the right side of the face and six on the left, whereas commoners have seven scars on the left and six on the right. This distinction applies only to the lower facial scarification, as the scars on the temple (zube) are applied at the discretion of the traditional barber.

This type of facial mark was historically prevalent across most areas of present-day Katsina Central and Katsina South Senatorial Districts. However, today, such marks are primarily found among Katsinawa living in rural villages (Babajo & Sallau, 2013, p. 29).

Facial Marks of Daurawa



Daura is one of the oldest Hausa states and, according to the Bayajidda legend, is believed to be the origin of all Hausa-speaking states. The bearers of this facial mark are referred to as Daurawa. The scarification is applied to both the left and right sides of the face, with the most prominent feature being two descending scars extending from the temple to the mouth. On the upper

part, near the temple, there are six to seven short scars on each side. Even today, anyone with this type of facial mark is thought to be descended from the Daura Emirate in Katsina State. However, at present, only a few Daurawa still bear this facial mark.

Facial Marks of Gobirawa



The facial marks of Gobirawa vary in form and style, depending on their location and the preference of the barber. Currently, Gobirawa are mainly found in Isa and Sabon Birni Local Governments of Sokoto State, as well as Tchibirin Gobir near Maradi in Niger Republic. A few are also present in Zamfara, Katsina, and Kebbi States of Nigeria. The style of facial marks in Isa and Sabon Birni typically involves six scars on the right side of the face and seven on the left. The Gobir aristocracy usually has seven scars on the right side and six on the

left, while commoners have seven on the left and six on the right.

Modernization has had a significant impact on the facial marks of Gobirawa. Some Gobirawa, for instance, still apply facial marks to their children, but in a more abbreviated form. In this style, the barber incises a single vertical cut on both sides of the cheek, as illustrated in the drawing below.



Facial Marks of Zamfarawa



The bearer of the above facial marks is referred to as Bazamfare from Zamfara Kingdom. Zamfarawa are now found in most parts of Zamfara State, as well as in some areas of Katsina and Sokoto States in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Their scarification is arranged

vertically, with ten scars on the left side and nine on the right side of the face (Babajo & Sallau, 2013, p. 11).

Modernization has also influenced the facial marks of Zamfarawa, with the barber now incising two vertical cuts on both sides of the cheek of the Bazamfare, as shown in the drawing below.



Facial Marks of Lezumawa



According to gathered information, Lezumawa were kith and kin of the Zamfarawa. Oral traditions suggest that the origin of their Aska is linked to their servile background. The story goes that a man from Zamfara named Jatau enslaved his brother, whom he began calling "Zumu," meaning brother in Hausa (derived from Zumunta, meaning kinship). Over time, the name evolved into le-Zumu. Jatau entrusted Lezumu with the responsibility of managing his household, which made him familiar with Jatau's secretive practices. This familiarity gave Lezumu the opportunity to use Jatau's fetish against him, ultimately leading to his liberation from bondage.

As a result, the descendants of Lezumu were called Lezumawa. They altered their scarification to distinguish themselves from the Zamfaranci. The Lezumawa scarification is arranged vertically and diagonally, resembling the scarification of Katsinanci, with the main difference being that the scars on the temple in Lezumanci are more numerous. In contrast, Katsinanci typically has six scars on the right side of the face and seven on the left. Lezumawa are primarily found in Katsina and Zamfara States of Nigeria.

Facial Marks of Lekawan Kabi



According to an oral interview gathered at Kanta Museum in Argungu, Lekayawa are the aristocrats of the Kabawa. The facial mark is administered only to the royal family, who are descendants of Kotal Kanta, the founder of the Kabi kingdom. The bearer of this facial mark is referred to as Balekaye. This scarification serves to distinguish the aristocracy from the commoners. The markings are arranged in a vertical pattern, radiating

from the mouth to the temple, with additional marks on the forehead. There are ten scars on the right side, nine on the left, and nine short scars on the forehead. The total number of scars administered is twenty-eight (Babajo & Sallau, 2013, p. 5).

Facial Marks of Kabawa



The bearer of this facial mark is referred as Bakabe or in plural Kabawa. The Kabi aristocracy are Lekayawa, who descended from the founder of the Kingdom-Kotal Kanta. The bearers of this facial mark

are therefore, the Kabi commoners. The marks are administered ten on the right face and eleven on the left.

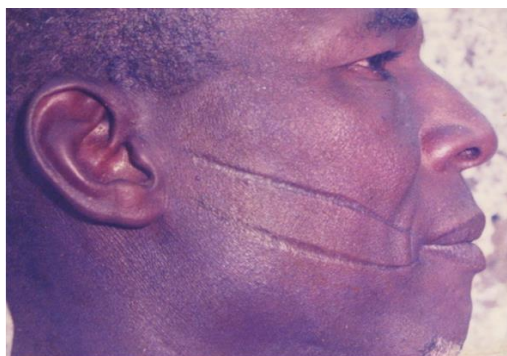
Facial Marks of Kwannawa



According to oral data, there is no significant difference between the scars administered to the aristocracies of Kwanni and the commoners, nor between a free-born and enslaved Kwanni citizen; they all bear the same facial marks. On the right side of the face, there are typically twelve marks, and on the left side, eleven. These marks are arranged horizontally, radiating from the mouth, with additional marks arranged vertically

from the temple, usually numbering eight to ten. Oral sources indicate that both Kwannawa, Kabawa, and Gobirawa share a common ancestry and originally had the same facial marks. However, the Kwannawa later differentiated themselves by adopting their current facial markings.

Facial Marks of Arawa



The bearer of the above facial marks is referred to as Ba'are or, in plural, Arawa, which literally means "Northerners" in Hausa. Both males and females bear

this facial mark. Typically, the scars are administered with two on both sides of the cheeks. Arawa are the commoners of the Kabi Kingdom, and they are mainly

found in Dogon Dutsi in Niger Republic, as well as in Birnin Kabi and Argungu in the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Facial Marks of Gimbanawan Jega



Gimbanawa are said to be the descendants of Malam Abdulsalam, the Hausa Jihad leader who assisted Sheikh Usmanu Danfodiyo in the southern part of the Sokoto Caliphate. Their scarification is vertically arranged, with twenty-seven marks on each face—thirteen on the upper part above the temple and fourteen on the lower part near the chin. Although the number of

Gimbanawa is small today, they are the rulers of the Jega Emirate. The individual mentioned above is among the remaining bearers of this scarification and holds the title of Dangkaladiman Zara Birnin Jega.

Facial Marks of Kutumbawa



Kutumbawa are descendants of Sarkin Kano Kutumbi one among the famous ancient Kano Habe kings. The the scars are administered two cuts on both side of the chicks with other scars accross the two lines on both sides of the chicks. Kutumbawa are found in some parts of Kano State in Bichi, Gwarzo, Kiru, Kano

Municipal and Dala. They are also found in some parts of Southern Katsina State, in Malumfashi, Kafur, Danja and Kankara.

Facial Marks of Gwaram People



Gwaram is a prominent emirate in the present day Jigawa State. The people of this emirate have their own unique identity through facial body marks that differs with other neighbouring towns and villages that are not in the emirate. This facial mark is referred to as

‘Yargwaram. The marks are three cuts below the eyes on both sides of the face. This type of facial mark is only found in Gwaram Emirate of Jigawa State.

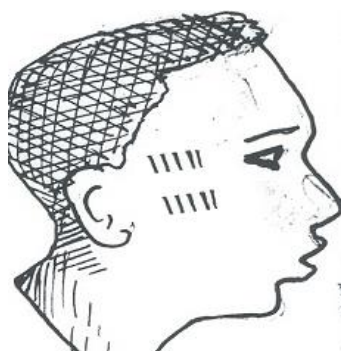
Facial Marks of Wangarawa



Wangarawa are the people residing in Rano and Gaya Local Governments in Kano State. They are also found in Dutse the Jigawa State Capital. The facial marks

of Wangarawa is five long vertical cuts on each face that stretched closer to the mouth.

Facial Marks of Warjawa



Warjawa are people found in the village of Masanya in Birnin Kudu Local Government, Jigawa State. The facial marks of Warjawa, referred to as Warjanci, are administered on both sides of the face. They consist of five short cuts at the top and another five short cuts below the ones at the top.

Kanuri people (Barebari) from the Borno Empire to many parts of Hausa land. Katsina is one of the areas where the Barebari migrated. According to Usman (1972), "The earliest definite indication of immigration into Kasar Katsina from Borno is with the birth of Wali Danmasani in 1595 by Bornu parents in Katsina." The descendants of Danmasani founded the Masanawa quarters in Birnin Katsina, and to this day, many inhabitants of Masanawa proudly associate themselves with Danmasani as their ancestor.

Facial Marks that Indicate the Bearers Were Not Hausa by Origin

As a result of migration by many communities into Hausa land, many lost their original identity in terms of language, literature, and cultural norms. These communities were assimilated into the Hausa social system, with their only connection to their ancestry being through facial marks. Several communities in different parts of Hausa land use facial marks to indicate their origin, including:

Facial Marks of Kanuri that Were Assimilated into the Hausa Social Setting (Barebari)

Trade, the spread of Islam, and in some cases, conflicts played important roles in the migration of the

Over time, many Barebari communities migrated to Katsina town and settled in various quarters, including Tsohuwar Kasuwa, Albaba, Unguwar Barebari in Gambarawa, and other towns and villages in the Katsina Emirate, such as Dutsin-ma, Safana, Kurfi, Danmusa, Charanci, Kankia, Batagarawa, Mashi, Mani, Dutsi, Kaita, Batsari, and Jibia. Although they were assimilated into the Hausa social system, these communities maintained their identity through facial marks that include the following:

Facial Marks of Barebarin Katsina



The facial marks of Barebari in Katsina consist of three arranged layers of cuts on both sides of the face. Each layer typically contains about ten to fifteen cuts, each approximately two inches long. These traditional marks were used to distinguish the Barebari from other communities.

With the influence of modernization, however, many Barebari in Katsina have ceased administering the

traditional style of facial marks. Instead, they have replaced the multi-layered cuts with a single long cut, approximately three inches in length, on the forehead, as depicted in the second drawing above. This change reflects the evolving practices among the Barebari while still maintaining a connection to their cultural identity.

Facial Marks of Kambarin Barebari



The Kambarin Barebari are originally Borno people who became assimilated into Hausa social formation. They are mainly found in Argungu, Kangiwa, Arewa in Kebbi State, Gummi in Zamfara State, and in Katsina emirate of Katsina State. The facial marks are

arranged in vertical order, fifty on the left and fifty-two on the right.

Facial Marks of Mangawa

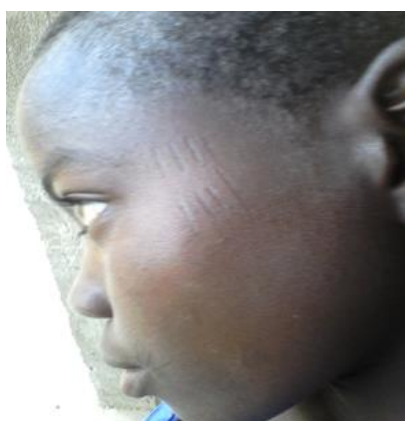


Oral traditions related to the history of the Borno Empire claim that the Mangawa people originated from Borno and migrated to parts of present-day Jigawa State, where they settled in towns such as Birniwa, Guri, Kirikasama, Malummadori, and Gumel. The Mangawa are credited with establishing the town of Gumel and its Emirate. This historical connection is evident in the fact that the current Emir of Gumel, Alhaji Ahmad Muhammad Sani II, is a descendant of the Mangawa aristocracy that founded the town. The facial marks of the Mangawa consist of two horizontal layers of five cuts on both sides of the face, extending toward the mouth (Interview with Dr. Abdulkadir Ginsau).

Facial Marks of Toaregs that were Assimilated into Hausa Social Setting

A long trading relationship existed between the Buzaye people and the Hausa, which led to the migration of some Buzaye to various parts of Hausaland, particularly to the Kano, Katsina, and Zamfara Kingdoms (Usman, 1972). The Buzaye people living in Hausaland are divided into various clans and communities, each with distinct ancestral affiliations. To maintain their ancestral identity and differentiate themselves from both their fellow Buzaye and the Hausa people in Hausaland, these communities used facial marks as a way to preserve and highlight their unique cultural heritage.

Facial Marks of Buzaye Agalawa



The bearers of these facial marks are primarily found in Katsina and Kano. The Agalawa, or Kel-Agalel as they are known in their original Tama sheik, originated from Abzin. Various traditions surround their activities, but over time, they became assimilated into the Hausa social formation. There is a slight distinction between the scarification practices of the Agalanci in Kano and Katsina. In Kano, Agalanci typically have six

vertical scars arranged - three on top and three beneath - and three additional scars radiating from the mouth. In contrast, Katsina Agalawa usually have four scars on top, four underneath, and three scars radiating from the mouth, as shown in the photograph above.

Facial Marks of Buzaye Makitanawa



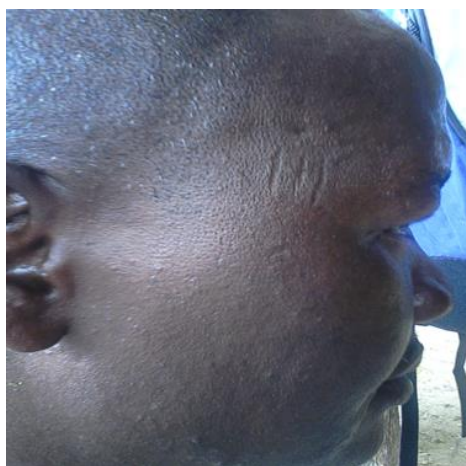
Like the Agalawa, the Makitanawa also trace their origins to the desert side. They are originally referred to as Kel-Makitan in their Tama sheik. Unlike

the Agalawa, the Makitanawa are found primarily in Katsina and the areas of Tasawa and Gazawa in Niger Republic. According to popular tradition, they were

slaves of the Tuaregs who once established estates in the Kasar Katsina region (Usman, 1972 p. 191). The

distinguishing feature of their facial marks is three marks that radiate from the corners of the bearers' eyes.

Facial Marks of Buzaye Tukarci



The Tukarci facial marks also originate from the desert side. Like the Agalawa and Makitanawa, the bearers of these facial marks were of servile background. The marks consist of three short scars on the temple, applied to both the right and left sides of the face. Tukarawa are mainly found in Kano and Katsina.

Facial Marks of Fulani Assimilated into Hausa Social Setting

The relationship between the Hausa people and Fulani pastoralists dates back several centuries. For example, in Katsina, historical records show that major migrations of Fulani from Borno to Katsina occurred in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Groups such as the Yerimawa, Gallawa, Dabawa, and Dallazawa settled in various parts of Katsina.

Dallazawa and their Facial Marks

The Dallazawa are descendants of Malam Abdulmumini, the father of Malam Umarun Dallaje, who was the first flag bearer and emir of Katsina after the 1804 Jihad of Sheikh Usmanu Danfodiyo. They

originally settled at Dallaji village in the present-day Bindawa Local Government Area of Katsina State (Usman, 1972). After the British colonization of Katsina in 1903 and the dethroning of Sarki Abubakar in 1905, the Dallazawa clan's rule ended with the installation of Malam Yero as the emir in 1906. However, the Dallazawa remain influential today, serving as District Heads and Village Heads in Safana, Zakka, and Bindawa districts of the Katsina Emirate. Prominent figures from the Dallazawa clan include Yariman Katsina, the District Head of Safana, Alhaji Sada Rufa'i; the District Head of Zakka, Alhaji Sani Muhammad Zakka; and the District Head of Bindawa, Alhaji Muhammadu Bello Usman.

The Dallazawa facial marks, known as Kalangu, are distinctive. These marks consist of two or three straight cuts, about two inches long, on both sides of the face, resembling a tree. Additional smaller cuts are made, attached to the main cuts. Today, many Dallazawa no longer practice administering these facial marks on their children.



The Kalangu facial marks of the Dallazawa are applied to both male and female members of the Dallazawa aristocracy. The distinctive feature of the Kalangu is its resemblance to a tree, with two or three straight cuts on both sides of the face. In some instances, Katsinawa individuals who pledged their full allegiance to the Dallazawa replaced their traditional Katsinanci facial marks with the Kalangu. This is why many people within and outside of Katsina identified those with Kalangu as Katsinawa. Additionally, some Hausa boys and girls were also given one or two Kalangu marks on their faces for decorative purposes.

Facial Marks of the Sullubawa

The Sullubawa clan, related to Mande-speaking languages and the Fulani, migrated to Hausaland during the 15th and 16th centuries. They settled in regions such as Katsina, Zamfara, Kano, and Zazzau (Usman, 1972). The facial mark of the Sullubawa consists of a single

vertical cut on the left cheek of all family members. This mark remains an important cultural symbol for many descendants of the Sullubawa clan, especially the aristocratic families who continue to pass down this tradition. The current ruling class in Katsina Emirate is of Sullubawa descent, and they still maintain the practice of administering these inherited facial marks to their children. Additionally, prominent Sullubawa families who settled in Katsina since the 17th century, such as the descendants of Malam Umarun Dumyawa, a key figure in the Jihad movement, can be found in areas like Gangara, Bugaje, and Zandam in Jibia Local Government. The Sullubawa also played a prominent role in the ruling class of Zazzau, where they ruled for many years.

The facial mark of Sullubawa is still administered by some members of the community as a proud symbol of their ancestral lineage.



The Sullubawa clan remains the ruling family of Katsina, with the descendants of Malam Dahiru, the father of Sir Usman Nagoggo, being the prominent figures in the family. This line also includes the first Sullubawa Emir of Katsina, who is the grandfather of the current Emir of Katsina, Alhaji Abdulmumini Kabir Usman, and other notable figures such as General Hassan Usman Katsina, Alhaji Lawal Kaita, and more. The Sullubawa facial marks are a prominent part of their identity, reflecting their deep ancestral roots.

Facial Marks of Rumawa

The Rumawa people, believed to have originated from ancient Rome, have a fascinating migratory history. According to historical records, around the 15th century, a group of Romans migrated from Rome to Africa. After spending time in Egypt, where they adopted Islamic religion and Arab culture, they moved due to unrest in the region. Eventually, they journeyed through Ethiopia and Agades before reaching Hausaland in 1724. The group initially settled in Daura, later relocating to Gezar Karbai in Maradi, and finally arriving in Zurmi in Zamfara Kingdom.

In 1727, a subgroup of the Rumawa people left Zurmi for Katsina, during the reign of Emir Muhammadu Uban Yara (1708-1740). They were warmly received by the Emir, who allowed them to settle west of Katsina in an area they called "Ruma Laraba" (now part of Batsari Local Government). The Rumawa people were renowned warriors, and their military prowess attracted many to migrate to the new settlement established by the group. Over time, the Rumawa became established in several parts of Katsina State, including Batsari, Safana, Dutsin-ma, Danmusa, Kurfi, Jibiya, and Batagarawa. They are also found in Waire Village in Bichi Local Government, Kano State.

The Rumawa facial marks, known as Rumanci, consist of two straight vertical cuts on both sides of the face, resembling the number "11". Both male and female members of the family bear these marks. Female members, however, also have an additional three vertical marks on the cheek. These marks are a key aspect of the Rumawa people's identity, and many still maintain the tradition of administering these marks to their children today.

Prominent figures from the Rumawa community include the Sarkin Ruman Katsina (District Head of Batsari), Alhaji Balarabe Mu'azu Ruma, the late

Dr. Abba Sayyadi Ruma, and the late AIG Dabo Aliyu. The Rumawa people are proud of their facial marks, which remain an important part of their cultural heritage.



The Yandakawa, Shemawa, Mallawa, and Kyarawa communities have facial marks that are similar to those of the Rumawa, though there are distinctive features that set each group apart. These marks are a significant part of their cultural identity, reflecting their ancestral lineage and heritage. Here's an overview of each group:

A - Yandakawa

The Yandakawa are descendants of Malam Na'Alhaji, who was associated with Malam Ummarun Dallaje and Malam Ummarun Dumyawa during the Jihad wars in Kasar Katsina. Their facial marks are identical to those of the Rumawa, referred to as 'Yandakanci in Hausa. However, unlike the Rumawa, the Yandakawa do not administer the additional three vertical marks on the cheek for females.

The Yandakawa are primarily found in Dutsin-ma, Danmusa, Batagarawa, and parts of Safana and Kurfi Local Governments. Prominent figures among them include the District Head of Dutsin-ma, Alhaji Sada Muhammad Sada, and the Magajin Malam (District Head of Danmusa), Alhaji Darda'u Danmusa, who are direct descendants of Malam Na'Alhaji.

B - Shemawa

The Shemawa share the same facial marks as the Rumawa and the Yandakawa. Their marks, known as Shemanci in Hausa, consist of two vertical cuts on both sides of the face, resembling the "11" numerical symbol. However, the Shemawa are distinct in their origins and cultural history. They primarily reside in Shema village, Dutsin-ma town, and Hayin-Gada in Dutsin-ma Local Government.

The Shemawa are significant in Dutsin-ma's history, as they were among the people who established

the town. Notable Shemawa individuals include Governor Alhaji Ibrahim Shehu Shema of Katsina State, and Alhaji Nagoggo Muhammad Nagarhi, Managing Director of Shema Oil. Many Shemawa still maintain the tradition of administering their inherited facial marks to their children.

C - Mallawa

The Mallawa are the current ruling family of Zazzau Emirate in Kaduna State and are descendants of Malam Musa, the first Fulani Emir of Zazzau after the Sokoto Jihad. They trace their ancestry back to the Old Mali Empire, which is why they are known as Mallawa or people from Mali.

Though the Mallawa are not from the same lineage as the Rumawa, Yandakawa, or Shemawa, they have a unique facial mark, known as Mallanci. The Mallawa facial marks are characterized by slightly wider gaps between the marks compared to those of the other groups. The Mallawa are mainly found in the Zazzau Emirate, and the current Emir of Zazzau, Malam Ahmed Nuhu, is a descendant of Malam Musa.

D - Kyarawa

The Kyarawa people, also found in parts of Katsina State, including Tsaskiya, Mammendo, Runka, Baudé in Safana Local Government, and other villages in Dutsin-ma, Batsari, and Kurfi, have facial marks similar to the Rumawa, Yandakawa, Shemawa, and Mallawa. The Kyarawa facial marks, referred to as Kyaranci, consist of two vertical cuts on each side of the face, much like the other groups, but with an additional distinctive feature: they have two vertical cuts at both corners of the mouth, giving them a unique appearance.

These facial marks are a vital aspect of Kyarawa identity and remain an important cultural symbol for many members of the community.



CONCLUSION

Identity is an important issue that unites and divides people living together for a common goal. Various families, communities, and societies across the world have different ways of identifying their members. As discussed above, the Hausa people living in Hausaland, in the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the southern part of Niger Republic, use facial body marks as a means of identifying their members and other ethnic groups that were assimilated by the Hausa people. Facial marks played an important role among various communities for many centuries in Hausaland, as the art served as a means of identifying members of each family and community, especially during conflicts and wars. The art of facial marks among the Hausa people is rapidly dying today, as many families and communities have stopped the practice of administering facial marks on the faces and other parts of the body of their children as a means of identification. This has led to the fact that, at present, the Hausa people don't have any sign to distinguish one family from another, unlike in the past when you could identify a child's family without asking where they came from. It was this situation that made the research face serious problems during data collection to get pictures of some of the facial marks. This forced us to use drawings that signify such types of facial marks.

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